

MISSION STATEMENT

Reaffirming our engagement to contribute to a globally attractive and competitive European Higher Education Area,

Committed to defending and promoting European values,

Responding to a prevailing demand of our student bodies,

We – **University Paris-Est Créteil** (France), **University of Córdoba** (Spain), **University of Évora** (Portugal), **University of Patras** (Greece), **University Lucian Blaga of Sibiu** (Romania), **University of Udine** (Italy) – are joining forces in a transnational alliance named **UNES - University for a New European Society**.

A shared vision

UNES is an alliance of forward-thinking **multi-disciplinary public research Universities**, recognised for their academic excellence and scientific rigour. Embedded within local and regional contexts and committed to internationalisation, our Universities have a strong sense of civic commitment and social responsibility. We are already cooperating in varying degrees and wish to consolidate and extend current links. We also have close relationships with Universities from the same areas outside the European Union: the Latin American and Southern Mediterranean countries as well as certain other African countries, with whom strong historical, linguistic and cultural links exist.

UNES is destined to become a **widely diverse, internationally minded and multi-lingual community** of students, teachers, researchers and administrators, encouraged and guided in personal and collective development. Our ambition is to prepare and accompany our social, economic and professional environments through transformations, by developing strong leadership and a bold vision for future generations and by becoming a source of support for building democratic, pluralist and inclusive societies. UNES is also committed to strengthening and disseminating European identity and values through specific courses and traineeship opportunities. UNES thus aims at training critical thinkers and active European citizens as well as highly skilled members of a globalised labour market, fit for a digital era.

To this end, UNES will design and implement a long-term transnational higher education prototype, having at its core mobility and inclusiveness, which can serve as a model within Europe and at a global level. We are convinced that complex societal challenges currently faced by European societies, especially Southern ones, can only be effectively addressed from innovative and sustainable perspectives. We have therefore decided to place under the general flagship of **sustainable innovation**, the actions we will develop in three interdisciplinary focus areas, aiming at achieving preservation, valorisation and promotion of: **well-being and active ageing; environment and food quality; cultural heritage**, in a context of **business innovation and digitalisation**. It is in these fields that our Universities have complementary strengths, expertise and resources on which we can solidly build. It is in these fields that UNES aspires to become a leading European University, pursuing the creation of new knowledge.

An ambitious mission

Our alliance will undertake without delay a number of actions in order to achieve the following key objectives.

Inclusive and efficient governance

Committed to the democratic functioning of the University, based on transparency and accountability, UNES will adopt a **governance approach encouraging participation** of all members of the University community, ensuring bottom-up input and enabling co-creation of its policies. Our governance structures will also involve external stakeholders to promote embeddedness and integration with the economic and social environment. Our model of governance will enable effective decision-making as well as communication and interaction between partners.

Seamless mobility

Convinced that mobility strongly contributes to fostering inter-culturally sensitive and multi-lingual citizens, we aim at achieving seamless mobility of students, teaching and administrative staff. While physical mobility remains our priority, accent will also be placed on innovative ways of virtual and blended mobility.

To this end, UNES will take action in order to **remove structural barriers** and eliminate administrative hurdles to physical movement. Such action will include full and automatic recognition of study periods accomplished and of credits obtained in other Member Universities. It will also involve full use of Erasmus without paper as well as the European Student Card. In parallel, UNES will permanently seek to create the necessary material conditions and structures providing opportunities for such movement, by creating joint task forces to address critical issues such as housing and financing, common IT platforms, shared library resources as well as training and research facilities.

UNES will also pilot **short-term programmes** (such as programmes on the acquisition of transversal research, entrepreneurial or linguistic skills; summer/winter schools on topics dealing with our three focus areas), which encourage further mobility and which can be particularly suitable for **apprentices/trainees, academics and life-long learners**.

UNES will promote **administration staff mobility** through specific incentives, such as recognition in evaluation processes. It will implement accessible mobility formats adapted to professional development, and organise staff weeks aiming at the acquisition of specific skills and at the sharing of best practises.

Enhanced inclusion and equity

Convinced that access to higher education is an important means of individual emancipation and empowerment and that the diversity of the academic and administrative staff is a source of valuable potential, UNES will pay special attention to issues of **inclusion and equity**. It will foster close cooperation among offices dedicated to such issues, elaborate Charters for admission and common recruitment policies, and promote inclusive language in all its actions.

UNES will take action in favour of vulnerable categories of students, such as students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, students with disabilities as well as refugees. Such actions will facilitate their transition from school education to University and accompany them all the way through their studying journey towards its successful accomplishment.

Innovation and quality in education and in research

Building on the most valuable research and intellectual traditions of its members, UNES will provide **research-informed and work-based education** across disciplines. It will pioneer a **student-centred and challenge-driven teaching model**, using modern pedagogical methods and tools, especially digital ones. Such model will stimulate creativity and equip students with digital skills and entrepreneurial mind-set, thus reinforcing their employability and entrepreneurship.

The innovative education model will be fully integrated in the **UNES joint degrees**, which will concern all study cycles. By including **flexible and cross-disciplinary curricula**, such degrees will give students freedom to choose courses according to their personal and professional projects. They will be subject to **continuous monitoring aiming at enhancement of quality** and contributing to the establishment of a quality assurance culture within our alliance.

UNES joint educational strategy will be supported by its research activities. Indeed, UNES will become **the framework of joint research projects and units** and will fund joint PhDs in its three priority thematic areas. Furthermore, UNES will implement a policy of excellence in research. To this end, it will establish a joint Ethics, Deontology and Scientific Integrity Committee and will ground Responsible Research and Innovation practises in research processes. All Member Universities will sign the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, and apply for the Human Resources Strategy for Researches award.

Multilingualism and European culture

UNES will foster and promote **multilingualism** in University programmes, research and administration. Our joint degrees will promote proficiency in three languages, i.e. two languages of the partner Universities (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Greek and Romanian) and English, the *lingua franca* of the alliance. In addition, UNES will adopt specific mobility formats focusing on **language learning** and will organise workshops for the improvement of the linguistic skills of academic and administrative staff.

Transmission of European culture will be pursued through mobility programmes as well as modules in the form of MOOCs, on European history, culture and current issues in European integration. These courses, which aim at **strengthening European identity and at raising awareness on pressing societal challenges**, will focus on topics and case studies particularly relevant for Southern European countries and will involve the use of several languages.

Societal outreach and interaction with socio-economic environment

Benefiting from the fact that our campuses are situated in diverse and dynamic territories and drawing from our deep engagement with our local and regional ecosystems, we will seek to **generate synergies with external stakeholders** to strengthen our local innovation ecosystems through the development of start-ups and entrepreneurial spirit. We will consolidate and share a network of partners including regional and local institutions, chambers of commerce, companies, technological parks and business associations related to our three focus areas. Close cooperation with those partners will enable UNES programmes to respond to the real needs of industries and business and to provide immersion in professional settings, thus increasing employability of UNES graduates. Such programmes will also foster local community involvement of students and will encourage their commitment to social service. Permanent interaction of UNES and external stakeholders will support economic development and social welfare, stimulate the creation of jobs in the three focus fields and enhance the attractiveness of our territories.

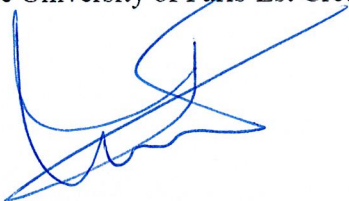
Serving as a model

UNES will act as a laboratory where new modes of teaching, learning, researching, managing and administrating will be designed and tested. It will share its experience and added value of its model within Europe and at a global level. To this end, UNES aspires to function as a global hub. We will establish a Joint Centre of cooperation with our partner Universities in Africa and Latin America, which will prepare students wishing to enrol in UNES degrees, invite researchers and teachers and disseminate best teaching and administrative practises.

UNES will join its action to that of other European alliances in order to work hand in hand with national governments and European institutions with the objective to **overcome existing barriers and create the appropriate legal and institutional framework for European Universities.**

We are convinced of our alliance's success and sustainability as its values and goals coincide with the priorities of its members' student, academic and administrative communities. This mission statement, endorsed by our Universities, will be our guiding star in the long journey upon which we are embarking.

The University of Paris-Est Créteil



The University of Evora
Assinado por: **ANA MARIA FERREIRA DA SILVA
DA COSTA FREITAS**
Num. de Identificação Civil: B1046506306
Data: 2020.01.15 16:57:37 +0000



The University of Sibiu

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The University of Cordoba

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The University of Patras

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Kyriazopoulou,
email=kyriazopoulou@upatras.gr
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The University of Udine

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